

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE COMMUNITY OF
PUEBLO

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2000

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I now take this moment to recognize the wonderful city of Pueblo, Colorado, a city I am proud to represent in the U.S. House of Representatives. Pueblo recently received national attention when it was named one of the Most Livable Communities in the United States by Partners for Livable Communities, a non-profit organization committed to improving America's collective quality of life.

Pueblo has a storied past, a vibrant present, and promising future, all of which make it most deserving of this high honor. It is with this, Mr. Speaker, that I now pay tribute to Pueblo, Colorado, one of America's most livable cities.

The beautiful city of Pueblo is located south of Denver in the shadows of Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Mountains. In 1886, four distinct towns were incorporated into one, forming what is now the magnificent community of Pueblo. In the century since, the community has played a major role in shaping Colorado's character, be it socially, culturally, or economically.

Early on, Pueblo was home to smelting plants that helped refine ore extracted from surrounding mines. These plants fueled in large part the community's economic activity. Moreover, Pueblo also played a key part in the early national race to establish railroads across Colorado's Rocky Mountains. Thanks in large measure to these and other industrial activities, Pueblo rapidly became a booming economic hub.

Pueblo's industrial muscle flourished in the many decades after its inception, until the 1980's when an economic downturn crippled the city's once burgeoning steel industry. Undeterred by tough times, community leaders from all walks of life closed ranks, fighting together to restore Pueblo's civic strength and economic vibrancy. Ultimately, this broad based local effort spurred a remarkable economic resurgence that continues even today. Pueblo's vitality is displayed each year when the city hosts the Colorado State Fair, highlighting the diversity and strength of Colorado's heritage.

Nothing better symbolizes that resurgence than the Historic Arkansas Restoration project, a local effort to draw business activity along the refurbished banks of the Arkansas River which cuts through the heart of Pueblo. On October 6, 2000, the landmark Riverwalk Project will be dedicated. When it is, it will be a symbolic statement of Pueblo's economic and cultural re-awakening that continues to thrive in this new century.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the State of Colorado and the U.S. Congress, I would like to

congratulate this wonderful community on being recognized as one of the most livable communities in the country. Pueblo has a special place in my heart and it is more than deserving of this distinguished recognition.

TRIBUTE TO THE JONESBORO SUN

HON. MARION BERRY

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 26, 2000

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to a great Arkansas institution, and I am proud to recognize the Jonesboro Sun in the Congress for its invaluable contributions and service to our nation.

Family-owned, independent newspapers are part of a great, albeit vanishing, tradition that goes back to our nation's earliest days.

According to one recent study, independents' share of the daily newspaper circulation dropped from 90 percent in 1990 to 14 percent in 1998. Last year, it was projected that half of America's family-owned dailies—which number less than 300—will be sold within the next five years.

On the morning of Saturday, September 2nd, Northeast Arkansas learned that the Troutt family, owners of the Jonesboro Sun for 99 of its 117 years, decided to sell the newspaper to the Paxton Media Group of Paducah, Kentucky. The Sun is the regional newspaper serving a dozen counties in the First Congressional District of Arkansas.

The Jonesboro Sun is a mainstream newspaper that has always emphasized fair and thorough coverage of the day-to-day news that affects the lives of eastern Arkansas residents. A great newspaper should always serve as the conscience of the area and the readers it serves. The Sun has played that vital role in the lives of many of our citizens.

The Sun is a great newspaper, not an entertainment-driven publication that feeds on this nation's cult of celebrity. The Troutt family operated the Sun more as a legacy than a business. It has been a profitable business, but also an understated, integral part of the community.

"Independent" means many things to many people. The dictionary definition is "free from the control of others," but that is just part of its meaning when applied to an independent newspaper like the Jonesboro Sun. In the first place, it is free from the control of a distant corporate headquarters when it comes to a sensitive or controversial story that an influential person might seek to suppress. The Sun's corporate headquarters has been contiguous to the newsroom, where management and ownership is only a few steps away to make sure the facts are presented fairly.

Independent also means freedom from the influence of advertisers. An independent paper

can choose to publish or not publish an article based on an objective evaluation of its newsworthiness. This decision is made in the newsroom—not in the advertising department.

John Troutt, Jr. the Sun's editor and publisher, did not worry about the bottom line when he was filing more Freedom of Information Act lawsuits than any other publisher in Arkansas. He did not worry about the bottom line or journalism awards while directing the newspaper's coverage of the Westside Middle School shooting tragedy in March 1998. He made the tough calls without regard to overtime and newsprint costs. He made these decisions because he is a newspaperman.

Still, the Sun was the first runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the Westside shootings.

Due to technology, as well as the economic and estate tax conditions that exist today, it has become increasingly difficult for independent newspapers to survive. Yet the independent local paper is most often the conscience, face, and voice of the community. The conglomerates that now dominate the newspaper industry must now rise to the challenge to fill the void left by these disappearing institutions.

With this in mind, I was very pleased to read the words of Fred Paxton, the chairman of the Paxton Media Group, which is assuming responsibility for the Sun.

"As is the case with the Troutts, ours is a family-owned newspaper company," Paxton noted. "As we have grown, we have sought to combine the best elements of local family ownership with the advantages and operating efficiencies of a larger organization."

"We have a philosophy about the role a newspaper should play in its community, but we rely on local managers to adapt that philosophy to each community in which we operate. We believe a newspaper should be a reflection of the community it serves," Paxton emphasized. "Publishers and editors make the final decisions about news and editorial content, and virtually every key business decision is made at the local level."

John Troutt, Jr., representing the third-generation of the family directing the operations of the Jonesboro Sun, observed that the Paxton Media Group is a fourth-generation family-owned media company with more than a century of history in the newspaper industry.

It is important that family newspapers survive, because I believe family ownership can make a difference. But most importantly, I hope we will always have newspapers like the Jonesboro Sun, with an independent spirit and the courage to report the truth with fairness. Our democracy depends on it.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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